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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, ex rel.

STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

CASE NO. PUC000003

**Ex Parte, In re: Investigation of the
appropriate level of intrastate access
service prices**

HEARING EXAMINER'S RULING

October 10, 2000

On October 3, 2000, the Staff of the State Corporation Commission ("Staff") and Verizon South Inc. ("Verizon South"), formerly GTE South Incorporated, filed a Motion to Approve Settlement of Case in the captioned proceeding. Therein Staff and Verizon South advise that they have reached agreement on issues in this case that involve Verizon South. They seek review of the settlement attached to the motion in an expeditious fashion so that the switched access rate decreases and other changes set forth in the agreement can be implemented quickly, perhaps as early as January 1, 2001. They therefore request that consideration of the settlement be separated from the remainder of this case; that Verizon South be removed from involvement in the ongoing proceedings involving the access services of other local exchange companies; and that consideration of the settlement be transferred back to the full Commission.

I find that the other parties to this case should have an opportunity to respond to this motion. Responses need only address the request that consideration of the proffered settlement be separated and transferred back to the Commission, and that Verizon South be removed from involvement in the proceedings addressing the access services of the other local exchange companies. The responses required hereby need not address the merits of the settlement itself. A later opportunity will be provided to offer comment on the settlement. Accordingly, it is **DIRECTED** that any response to the Motion to Approve Settlement of Case should be filed on or before October 16, 2000.

Deborah V. Ellenberg
Chief Hearing Examiner